



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## *Department of Criminal Justice Services*

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Dear DCJS Partners:

On behalf of everyone at the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), our thoughts go out to all those affected by COVID-19. First and foremost, we would like to thank all of our grant recipients for your resilience, patience, and efforts to stop the spread and keep communities safe. While the environment around us is uncertain and ever-changing, we are committed to ensuring funded programs have the clarity they need during this unprecedented time. We hope that this message can alleviate some of the questions you may have.

Effective March 16, 2020, DCJS has moved to maximum telework capacity. All staff are working remotely and will be available to assist grantees, stakeholders, and the public during this period. Below, we share some very important updates regarding funded services, reimbursements, and additional information regarding the steps DCJS has taken to mitigate issues because of this pandemic.

**Grant Reimbursements:** The Grants Management Online Information System (GMIS) will remain in service. Submission of financial reports and the processing of reimbursements will continue as normal. If you are facing extraordinary circumstances and there is a critical need to expedite a reimbursement, please contact your DCJS Grant Monitor. Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and allowances will be made so that you can meet your financial obligations. We are here to work with you and assist as we navigate the circumstances.

**Programmatic and financial monitoring:** Until otherwise notified, all planned on-site monitoring will be conducted as remote monitoring or postponed to a later date. You will be contacted by your DCJS Grant Monitor to make alternative arrangements. If your organization is unable to participate in remote monitoring due to operational limitations, you may request postponement to a later date.

**Programmatic and financial reporting:** For grantees unable to meet the deadline, for the reporting period January 1 – March 31, 2020, DCJS is willing to provide a two week extension **if you request it in writing**. However, grant funds will not be disbursed unless a financial report

has been submitted. Please note that at this time, due dates for reports for the remaining fiscal year are unchanged. As noted earlier, if you are facing extraordinary circumstances and there is a critical need to expedite a reimbursement, please contact your DCJS Grant Monitor.

**Conferences, events, and other gatherings:** For conference attendance, meetings, trainings, and other gatherings that are scheduled in the near future, grantees should work with their DCJS Grant Monitor to address issues resulting from postponed or canceled meetings, such as using grant funds to cover hotel or travel-related cancellation fees and penalties. Please do everything possible to mitigate potential expenses by canceling as quickly as you can and be sure to keep all documented attempts at requested reimbursements. Grantees should try to have the airline reimburse the canceled ticket(s) in cash. However, if the airline will only refund the cancellation as a credit, the grantee should apply the credit to a future trip for the same grant or project. If that is not possible, the grantee should use the credit for another program or project and reimburse the original grant or project with the equivalent dollar amount. If neither of those options is possible, then the grantee should process the trip as a cancellation, which DCJS approves to be charged to the grant due to this mitigating circumstance. Please document these such changes via budget amendment request in the Grants Management Online Information System (GMIS) for record keeping purposes.

**Interruptions in performance of work under the grant:** Please review your established local and office policies, to determine how you should handle personnel costs during any period(s) of interruption to the performance of work under the grant. You should direct any questions about allowability of costs to your DCJS Grant Monitor.

**Leave Policies & Alternative Work Solutions:** DCJS has advised programs that they should use their existing leave policies to address employee absences. If you do not currently have policies regarding working remotely and paid administrative leave, you may wish to develop them as soon as possible. Provided your organization has policies in place and all staff (grant funded and non-grant funded) are treated equally, we can continue to reimburse the funded project even if services are temporarily reduced. In addition to completing the budget amendment form to indicate personnel changes, please send your revised policies to your DCJS Grant Monitor.

**Budget amendments:** DCJS will allow submission of budget amendments on current grants (FY20) to support necessary costs in response to COVID-19. The limit on budget amendments has been lifted. This can include technology support for personnel, reimbursements to personnel for use of personal technology at home, emergency client assistance funds, or emergency rental assistance to clients, as examples. DCJS encourages programs to evaluate their current budgets to shift any planned travel funding to other cost categories. Please maintain documentation of all changes and submit any budget amendments or questions directly to your DCJS Grant Monitor.

**Governor's Executive Order 53:** On March 23, 2020, Governor Ralph Northam issued Executive Order 53 regarding temporary restrictions on non-essential businesses. Please note that this order does not apply to government agencies. For other agencies, it states, "although business operations offering professional rather than retail services may remain open, they should utilize teleworking as much as possible. Where telework is not feasible, such business must

adhere to social distancing recommendations, enhanced sanitizing practices on common surfaces, and apply the relevant workplace guidance from state and federal authorities.” You must decide what is best for your agency, staff, and clients, but there is nothing directly in Executive Order 53 that states agencies cannot provide critical in-person services. However, there is the guideline about not having more than 10 people gathered, which may impact group meetings or how many people are allowed in the office at one time. The full Executive Order can be found here: [https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/executive-actions/EO-53-Temporary-Restrictions-Due-To-Novel-Coronavirus-\(COVID-19\).pdf](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/executive-actions/EO-53-Temporary-Restrictions-Due-To-Novel-Coronavirus-(COVID-19).pdf)

**Information Systems/anti-virus protection:** DCJS wants to advise all grantees to remain vigilant for scams related to COVID-19. Please ensure that all computer equipment purchased with grant funds is protected with anti-virus software. Cyber criminals may send emails with malicious attachments or links to fraudulent websites to deceive victims into revealing sensitive information or donating to fraudulent charities or causes. It is advisable to exercise caution in handling all emails with COVID-19 related subject line, attachment or hyperlink, and be very wary of social media pleas, texts, or calls related to COVID-19.

**Information and Resources:** DCJS will continue to provide updates to you as additional guidance develops. For more information on COVID-19, please visit <https://www.virginia.gov/coronavirus-updates/> or <https://www.dcjs.virginia.gov/>.

Thank you for your patience and partnership with us during this unusual situation. We truly want the health and well-being of your staff, volunteers, and those you serve to be the first priority. Your best contact during this time is your DCJS Grant Monitor. Please let them know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Shannon Dion